

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 01614 01 OF 02 131055Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----115056 131059Z /10

R 131015Z NOV 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3769  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MUSCAT 1614

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, TC, MU  
SUBJECT: OMAN'S DISPUTE WITH RAS AL KHAIMAH

REF ABU DHABI'S 3168 AND PREVIOUS TELS; MUSCAT 1603

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI TOLD AMBASSADOR NOV. 13 THAT OMAN HAS GOTTEN TOUGH WITH UAE OVER RAS AL KHAIMAH'S ENCROACHMENT UPON OMANI TERRITORY AND VILLAGES BECAUSE OF FRUSTRATION AT UAE FAILURE TO RESPOND TO OMANI COMPLAINTS REGISTERED PERIODICALLY SINCE 1974. POSITIONING OF OFFSHORE DRILLING RIG IN WHAT OMAN REGARDS AS CLEARLY ITS OWN TERRITORY BROUGHT MATTER TO HEAD LAST MONTH. SAID OMAN HAS AGREED TO SUGGESTION BY SAUDIS,SWHO WERE BROUGHT INTO DISPUTE AT UAE BEHEST, THAT UAE AND OMANI FOREIGN MINISTRIES DISCUSS MATTER AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN DECEMBER TO ATTEMPT  
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TO RESOLVE IT. ZAWAWI SEEMED RATHER PESSIMISTIC THAT UAE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES WOULD TAKE A STRONG ENOUGH LINE WITH SHAIKH OF RAS AL KHAIMAH TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION. END  
SUMMARY.

2. ORIGINS OF DISPUTE.SDURING NOV. 13 MEETING AT FOREIGN MINISTRY REQUESTED BY AMBASSADOR 4 DAYS EARLIER, QAIS

ZAWAWI WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON SITUATION DISCUSSED IN ABU DHABI 3168 AND SEVERAL EARLIER CABLES WHICH FROM VIEW-POINT OF UAE AUTHORITIES IS A SUDDEN OMANI CLAIM TO RAS AL KHAIMAH TERRITORY. HE REPLIED THAT THIS MATTER GOES BACK WELL BEFORE 1974 AND SHOULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS A CONTINUOUS EFFORT BY SHAIKH OF RAS AL KHAIMAH TO TAKE OVER MORE AND MORE OMANI TERRITORY, RATHER THAN AN OMANI CLAIM FOR SOMETHING BELONGING TO ONE OR MORE OF THESEMIRATES. HE SAID THAT FOR OVER 3 YEARS OMAN HAS MADE APPROACHES TO

SHAIKH ZAYID ASKING THAT HE SEE THAT RAS AL KHAIMAH CEASE ITS INCURSIONS, WHICH HE CLAIMED HAVE INCLUDED CHANGING NAMES OF SOME VILLAGES AND JABALS. OMAN HAD REFRAINED FROM DEALING DIRECT WITH SHAIKH OF RAS AL KHAIMAH ON THE PROBLEM, NOT WANTING TO BE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO BREAK UP THE FEDERATION. DESPITE PROMISES TO TAKE SOME ACTION, SHAIKH ZAYID HAD DONE NOTHING.

3. THE OIL RIG INCIDENT. ZAWAWI SAID MATTER WAS BROUGHT TO A HEAD BY APPEARANCE OFFSHORE OF AN OIL RIG IN WHAT OMAN REGARDS AS CLEARLY ITS OWN TERRITORY. AN OMANI NAVAL PATROL VESSEL APPROACHED IT IN MID-OCTOBER AND ASKED IT TO MOVE WEST, BUT THIS WAS NOT DONE. MINISTER OF INTERIOR MUHAMMAD BIN AHMAD'S WATE-OCTOBER MISSION O UAE WAS THEN MOUNTED. ZAWAWI EMPHASIZED THAT OFFSHORE OIL ACTIVITY HAD NOT BEEN AN ELEMENT IN THE DISPUTE UP TILL THEN, BUT WAS VIEWED BY

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OMANIS IN OCTOBER AS A NEW TACTIC BY RAS AL KHAIMAH TO ATTEMPT TO NAIL DOWN ITS ONSHORE ENCROACHMENTS OF EARLIER YEARS.

4. THE UAE DELEGATION OF NOVEMBER 2. THE AUDIENCE OF AJMAN'S CROWN PRINCE WITH SULTAN QABOOS ON NOV. 2 DID NOT GO AT ALL WELL, SAID ZAWAWI. THE VISITOR SEEMED UNAUTHORIZED OR UNPREPARED TO CONCEDE ANYTHING, AND THE SULTAN LEFT HIM IN NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY FED UP BY LACK OF RESPONSE OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS BY UAE AUTHORITIES TO OMAN'S ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ITS TERRITORY FROM BEING WHITTLED AWAY. ZAWAWI NOTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT NUMEROUS QUERIES AND PETITIONS HAVE REACHED SULTAN QABOOS FROM HIS WALI AND FROM OMANI CITIZENS IN THE AREA FROM WHICH IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE CONCERNED THE SULTAN IS ABANDONING THEM OR BEING UNSUPPORTIVE OF THEIR RIGHTS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MUSCAT 1614

EXDIS

5. THE SAUDI MISSION. HAVING BEEN APPRISED OF SITUATION BY THE UAE, SAUDI FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY MANSOURI THEN ARRIVED IN ABU DHABI AND SALALAH NOV. 8/9 WITH SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS, ACCORDING TO ZAWAWI. THE PRINCIPAL ONE WAS FOR UAE AND OMAN TO MEET BILATERALLY AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO TRY TO WORK OUT THE MATTER. OMAN AGREED TO THIS, AS HAD THE UAE. THE SAUDIS WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE THEMSELVES IN THE DISCUSSIONS.

6. NEXT STEPS. ZAWAWI SAID THE OMAN-UAE MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL (SUWAIDI AND HIMSELF) BUT PROBABLY NOT UNTIL ABOUT DECEMBER 10 INASMUCH AS NEXT FEW WEEKS ARE SOVERLOADED IN BOTH CAPITALS BECAUSE OF RESPECTIVE NATIONAL DAYS, EID AL-ADHA HOLIDAYS AND OTHER EVENTS. MEANWHILE AN AGENDA WOULD BE PREPARED AND THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE AN EXCHANGE OF BRIEFS ON JUST WHAT THE FACTS ARE IN THE MATTER. ZAWAWI CONCLUDED THAT THE ASPECT

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THAT BOTHERS HIM THE MOST IS WONDERING JUST WHAT ACTION THE UAE CAN OR WILL TAKE VIS-A-VIS RAS AL KHAIMAH'S RULER ONCE OMAN HAS MADE ITS CASE AS TO THE LEGITIMACY OF ITS POINT OF VIEW ON SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE TERRITORY CONCERNED. THAT IS, CAN SHAIKH ZAYID WORK HIS WILL ON SHAIKH SQR?

7. COMMENTS: ZAWAWI SEEMED SURE OF HIS GROUND ON THIS SUBJECT AND NOT AT ALL ON THE DEFENSIVE. AT SEVERAL POINTS HE EXPRESSED OMAN'S FRUSTRATION AT HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE UAE RATHER THAN WITH RAS AL KHAIMAH DIRECTLY ON THE MATTER, YET NEVER GETTING ACTION OUT OF SHAIKH ZAYID. HE CONVEYED CLEARLY THE SENSE THAT SULTAN QABOOS FEELS WRONGED BY RAS AL KHAIMAH AND SOMEWHAT BITTER THAT THE UAE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER WITH ANYTHING LIKE THE PROPER DISPATCH. IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT THE SULTAN'S PIQUE ON THIS SCORE HAS COME TO OUTWEIGH ANY INCLINATION TO REFRAIN FROM MAKING AN ISSUE OF IT EVEN THOUGH IN THE PROCESS HE MIGHT JEOPARDIZE PROSPECTS OF ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM SHAIKH ZAYID IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

8. ON PRESENT EVIDENCE, THERE IS NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT INDIVIDUAL BRITISH EXPATRIATES, OR UK GOVERNMENT ITSELF, ARE BEHIND THIS ON THE OMANI SIDE. WHILE THIS COULD NONETHELESS BE THE CASE, WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT IT. INCIDENTALLY, ZAWAWI SAID FLATLY THERE IS NO CONNECTION WHATEVER BETWEEN THIS ISSUE AND THE MATTER OF REMAINING UAE-SAUDI-OMANI DIFFERENCES OVER THEIR BORDERS IN BUREIMI AND ENVIRONS.

9. WE MUST ADMIT THAT OMANI DEMARCHE OF LATE OCTOBER SEEMS TO EXPOSE THEM AS BEING RATHER INSENSITIVE TO UAE GRIEF OVER ASSASSINATION OF SAIF GHUBBASH A FEW DAYS BEFORE.

10. FINALLY, AND INCIDENTALLY, ZAWAWI TOLD AMBASSADOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SHAH OF IRAN WOULD PAY HIS FIRST VISIT TO OMAN IN VERY EARLY DECEMBER. A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES WOULD BE MADE IN ABOUT A WEEK.  
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## Message Attributes

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